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Lobster Pot: It's Not Fish Stew, It's Tournament Sled Hockey

New Englanders to Fight New York Teams for First Annual Crown Dec. 12-14

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DURHAM, N.H. - The landmark of New England's ice hockey season may very well be the Bean Pot, an annual competition among Boston's hometown college teams. But for the first time this December, New Englanders can attend what may become an annual landmark on the sled hockey scene - the Lobster Pot.

From Friday, Dec. 12, through Sunday, Dec. 14, four sled hockey teams will compete against each other in this invitational at the Family Ice Center in Falmouth, Maine. The Northeast Passage Crushers, affiliated with the University of New Hampshire and the Family Ice Center, will host the Boston Blades, the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (EPVA) Islanders from Long Island, and the Buffalo Freeze.

Sled hockey is the fastest growing winter sport for people with physical disabilities. What's unique about it is that sled hockey is the only sport where able-bodied athletes play alongside those with disabilities (except in Paralympic-sanctioned events). Players compete in sleds mounted on two hockey skate blades.

The USA won the Gold Medal in the 2002 Winter Paralympics, and 14 current or former Team USA and US Paralympic Team members will be playing in the Lobster Pot.

"There are probably 50 sled hockey teams out there and these guys were invited for their quality hockey, consistency, and good, friendly play," said event coordinator and Northeast Passage Crushers team member Craig Gray.

The game schedule is as follows: Friday, Dec. 12 - 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 13 - 8 a.m., 10 a.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.; championship game Sunday, Dec. 14 at 8 a.m. Admission is free.

The Family Ice Center is located at 20 HatTrick Drive in Falmouth (behind WalMart on Route 1). Call 207-781-4200 for directions.

The University of New Hampshire's Northeast Passage, WMTW-Channel 8, Family Ice Center in Falmouth, and Alpha One of South Portland are sponsors of the Lobster Pot.